



Charles Burchfield

Whitney Museum of American Art



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

Charles Burchfield

*A Concentration of Works from the Permanent Collection
of the Whitney Museum of American Art*

Patterson Sims

Associate Curator, Permanent Collection

A 50th Anniversary Exhibition

June 25–August 17, 1980

Charles Burchfield is one of a series of exhibitions celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Each exhibition concentrates on the work of one artist represented in depth in the Permanent Collection of the Museum. The series is sponsored by Champion International Corporation. The exhibitions were organized and the accompanying publications written by Patterson Sims, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection, with Ella Foshay, Curatorial Assistant.

John I. H. Baur's research and writings on Burchfield (see Bibliography) were of particular value in the preparation of this brochure.

Design & Typography by Howard I. Gralla
Typesetting by The Stinehour Press
Printing by The Meriden Gravure Company
Cover Printed by Acme Printing Company, Inc.

Photograph Credits

Photographs of all works in the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art are by Geoffrey Clements, with the exception of p. 29 by Taylor & Dull, Inc.; pp. 9, 27 by The Towne Studio; and pp. 14, 15, 16, 29. In addition, credit is due Oliver Baker, p. 13; and Hare Photographs Inc., p. 25.

Copyright © 1980
by the Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021

Cover:

Charles Burchfield, **Noontide in Late May**, 1917
Watercolor and gouache on paper, 21⁵/₈ × 17¹/₂ inches
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.408

Introduction

Charles Burchfield (1893–1967) has come to be regarded as the preeminent twentieth-century chronicler of the inland American landscape. In almost two thousand paintings, innumerable drawings, sketches, doodles, and fifteen prints, Burchfield's pictorial vision perpetuated a childhood fascination with natural forces and seasonal changes. (Only during the 1920s and 1930s did he “digress” into urban and suburban scenes.) Around the age of fourteen his enthusiasm for nature assumed its first serious artistic form as he set out to draw the flowering wild plants and fruit trees of Salem, Ohio, the small rural town where he was raised.

Burchfield graduated from high school in 1911 and a year later, supported by a scholarship and savings from the part-time jobs he had held since the seventh grade, he entered the Cleveland School of Art (now the Cleveland Institute of Art). At the School, he was most excited by classes in design and decorative illustration, but bored by those in cast and life drawing. He studied with William J. Eastman, Henry G. Keller, and Frank N. Wilcox; but Keller was clearly the most influential. Burchfield was fortunate to find such an encouraging and well-informed professor: Keller championed the 1913 Armory Show, Japanese prints, and Diaghilev's *Ballet Russe*. Burchfield was particularly attracted to the Oriental aesthetic of nature, an attraction fostered while working as a guard in an exhibition of Chinese art held in Cleveland. In his spare time, he arranged his own liberal arts education. He read widely from authors as diverse as Nietzsche and Yeats. The writings of Thoreau, as well as those of the prolific naturalist John Burroughs (1837–1921), were especially meaningful to Burchfield. He also began his intense, life-long enthusiasm for classical music, which had a lasting significance for his perception of nature. Music and the writings of Burroughs, Thoreau, and others provided sustaining models for his drawings and for the

poetic musings in the journals he began to keep in his teens.

These educational experiences helped transform a shy and unsophisticated young man into an inspired and accomplished artist. The combination of an intellectually deprived background with an acute intuitive intelligence brought his art to a curious junction between the naive and the sophisticated. His artistic aspirations were encouraged in 1915 when he received third prize—and twenty-five dollars—for a poster for the nascent Cleveland Museum of Art, which opened in June 1916. At the age of twenty-three, he left Ohio for the first time, having been awarded a scholarship to the National Academy of Design in New York City. Never completely happy in an urban environment, however, he lasted only one day at the Academy and about two months in the city itself. He then returned to Salem, to his job in the mailing department of the W. H. Mullins Company, a metal and auto parts manufacturer. But in New York he did meet Mrs. Mowbray Clarke, who arranged an exhibition of his watercolors at her Sunwise Turn Bookshop. She also bought some of his pictures, sold several others, and represented him for six years.

Burchfield's watercolors from 1915 to 1918—stylized, decorative, yet deeply emotional—are among his (and the period's) most original and intense works. Though not truly modernist in intent or origin, their powerful expressiveness makes them modernist in realization. This highly productive phase of Burchfield's art ended in July 1918, when he was inducted into the U.S. Army. Around the same time, he stopped making the vivid, imaginative nature studies and fantasies that had originated in childhood memories, and turned to more somber revelations of what he called “the hardness of human lives.”¹ Discharged from the Army in January 1919, he returned to his job at the W. H. Mullins Company in Salem, and painted only in his

spare time. The critical response to the one-man exhibition of his watercolors, arranged by Mrs. Clarke, in February 1920 at the Kevorkian Gallery in New York was mixed, but sales were sufficient to permit Burchfield to take off the summer months from his job to paint. He also traveled to Tennessee and to New York, where he met Arthur B. Davies. Davies introduced him to a new oil-tempera technique, which he began on occasion to employ, though watercolor continued to be his favorite medium.

In 1921, having lost his job with the Mullins Company, Burchfield devoted all his time to his art. He submitted five works to the Cleveland Museum's "First Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Painting." A jury headed by George Bellows awarded him First Prize in watercolor and a silver medal. That same year Burchfield became engaged to Bertha L. Kenreich, the daughter of local farming people. Burchfield now sought a paying position. The dean of the Cleveland School of Art put him in touch with M. H. Birge & Sons, a Buffalo wallpaper company. On the basis of samples of his early watercolors, Burchfield was hired as assistant in the design department and moved to Buffalo in late November 1921. A month later, the Brooklyn Museum bought one of his watercolors—his first work to enter a museum collection.

Away from the familiarity and country atmosphere of Salem, Burchfield turned to more somber subject matter that reflected his urban setting. The fantasy, floral motifs and intense color of his earlier work were redirected into his wallpaper designs. Judging from the few surviving examples, these designs contained pleasing and lush interplays of floral and leaf patterns. They resemble greatly enlarged details of his earlier works, while anticipating, with surprising similarity, the present-day enthusiasm for pattern and decoration. It seems likely that his absorption in this wallpaper work made it unnecessary to repeat cheerful and precise flower motifs in his art. Burchfield became immersed in his responsibilities at Birge & Sons—by the middle of the

decade he had a family of five to support—and produced fewer than seventy-five watercolors and oil paintings between 1922 and 1929, when he resigned from the company. These works were more carefully composed, more specifically related to particular urban and suburban sites, and often more ambitious in scale. They were shown in five one-man and eight group exhibitions during the 1920s. The prestigious Montross Gallery in New York gave Burchfield three shows and in February 1929 he was taken on by the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery, with which he remained affiliated for the rest of his life.

During the 1930s, though he was included in many one-man and group exhibitions, Burchfield, like most American artists, made relatively few sales. Unlike some, he did not join the W.P.A. or receive any other government support for artists. But he did receive numerous honors, awards, and requests to jury shows, and somehow managed to support his family. In 1936 and 1937, he accepted commissions for illustrations from the artistically active *Fortune* magazine.

From 1929 on, along with the interest in Burchfield's current work, there occurred a critical reevaluation of his early watercolors. In 1929 he had somewhat hesitantly brought them to the attention of his first important collector and patron, Edward W. Root. Root immediately acquired several and encouraged the Rehn Gallery to begin to represent the artist. Groups of these watercolors were exhibited in 1930 at the Museum of Modern Art (the museum's first one-person show and Burchfield's first solo exhibition in a museum) and in 1934 at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.

In late 1939, an exhibition of his early watercolors at the Rehn Gallery prompted Burchfield to examine his professional position. He realized that he had traded the intensity, innocence, and immediacy of these first works for greater realism, solidity, and technique. According to John I. H. Baur's moving account, in April 1943 (a few days after his fiftieth birthday) Burchfield had a

dramatic and conclusive insight about his art: he observed that “what it needs is to be restored completely to the 1917 manner.”² He began to enlarge and rework the watercolors of the 1916–18 period, expanding his ideas by adding sections of paper to the original sheets.

Burchfield’s style now entered a third and final stage, an inspired coda to his original creative achievement. He merged the freshness and fantasy of the early work with the assured technique of the more realistic, somber scenes of the previous two decades. Bigger and bolder, more fluid and rhapsodic, these works stressed nature’s drama or spirituality. Not exhibited until 1946, the new work was greeted with hesitation and puzzlement by critics and collectors—in part because this Rehn Gallery exhibition followed a major retrospective in 1944. That show, which opened at the Albright Art Gallery and traveled in a smaller version around the country, had not included any examples of the new work. Burchfield’s third style confused an audience that had just learned to regard him as a precursor of the Regionalist movement and a forger of stolid images of the urban environment.

As the public began to appreciate and understand what he was now doing, Burchfield’s professional stature continued to grow. From 1948 to 1951 and again from 1952 to 1955, he served on the Board of Directors of the Albright Art Gallery. During the same period he received several honorary degrees and was made a Trustee of the American Academy in Rome. In 1949, for the first time in twenty years, he took a job, teaching summer classes at the University of Minnesota. He taught at the Art Institute of Buffalo, Ohio University, the University of Buffalo, and the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, and later acted as a consultant in art at the New York State University College, Buffalo.

From 1930 on, Burchfield was subject to bouts of lumbago induced in some measure by his “persistent habit of painting outdoors under the most improbable conditions.”³ For it was Burchfield’s contention that “you cannot experience a landscape until you have

known all its discomforts.”⁴ He began seriously suffering from an asthmatic condition in 1956, and other respiratory ailments followed. In November 1963 he suffered a heart attack. But as soon as he was able, he always returned with fresh energy to hard work. On January 10, 1967, three months after his show of new work opened at the Rehn Gallery and a month after the opening of the Charles Burchfield Center in Buffalo, Burchfield died of a heart attack. He had worked with exuberance up to the last days of his life. Of his Rehn Gallery show in October 1966—the last of his eighteen one-man shows there—the *New York Times* reviewer noted that the seventy-three-year-old Burchfield “has never painted with a surer touch or a more delicate one. He has never caught us up more effectively into his poetic vision of sunlight (or moonlight), skies, wind and flowers (or winter trees).”⁵

Because he always lived in Salem, Ohio, or in upstate New York, Burchfield’s earliest connections with Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney did not occur until the time of the Whitney Museum’s founding in 1930, when four of his works were purchased from the Rehn Gallery. Two of them were watercolors of the 1916–18 period, *Tall White Sun* and *Noontide in Late May*. The other two were the recent watercolor *September Elms* and the oil on canvas *Winter Twilight*.

The next three works to enter the collection were again purchased from the artist through the Rehn Gallery: *Ice Glare* in 1933, *Old House by Creek* in 1939, and *The Market at Christmastime* in 1942. In 1955 *August Evening* was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Lesley G. Shaefer and *An April Mood*, one of the artist’s most important later works, was acquired with the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman. The Whitney Museum’s rich holdings of Burchfield’s work came in large measure through the efforts and enthusiasm of John I. H. Baur, then Curator and later Director of the Museum. In 1956 Baur organized for the Whitney Museum a major retrospective of the artist’s work and

wrote, in cooperation with Burchfield, an accompanying catalogue and a book. Burchfield later said of the book that "it is still *the* definitive account of my artistic life, and probably will remain so; better than anything I have written or could do."⁶ Baur has remained the most prolific and informed writer on the artist.

In the last twenty-five years, four additional examples of the third phase of Burchfield's work have been given to the Museum. The Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art gave *Overhanging Cloud in July* in 1960, and in 1974 Flora Whitney Miller, daughter of the Museum's founder, a former President and now Honorary Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum, donated—in honor of Baur's retirement—*Goldenrod in December*. Also in honor of Baur's retirement, the Raydon Gallery presented three of Burchfield's characteristically lighthearted pencil doodles. Two years later, through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Solomon K. Gross, *Winter Light, Backyard* entered the collection. In 1980 Mrs. Nicholas Millhouse made *Golden Dream* a Promised 50th Anniversary Gift.

Four related examples of the artist's more subdued work of the 1920s and 1930s—*Night Scene*, *Cottages in the Winter Rain*, *Dawn*, and *Night Scene with Clouds*—were added in 1976 and 1977, the first three through the generosity of Charles Simon and the fourth anonymously by a Trustee, again in honor of Baur. The Museum's sole crayon drawing, *Study of Thistle*, was purchased in 1965; the only print, *Summer Benediction*, was given in 1974 by Dr. and Mrs. David B. Pall.

Since November 1931, when *Winter Twilight* was shown in the Whitney Museum's opening exhibition, Burchfield's paintings have been exhibited with great frequency at the Museum in loan shows and exhibitions of the Permanent Collection. His work was included thirty-one times in the Museum's Annual and Biennial Exhibitions of contemporary art. The current exhibition is the second one-man show given to the artist by the Museum. Though much smaller than the 1956 retrospective, its quality and range represent a major holding of his work and attest to the Museum's commitment to Burchfield.

Charles Burchfield (1893–1967)

1893

Born April 9 in Ashtabula Harbor, Ohio. Father, William Charles Burchfield, a merchant-tailor; mother, Alice Murphy Burchfield.

1898

Death of father. Moves with mother, three brothers and two sisters to Salem, Ohio, his mother's birthplace. From the seventh grade on, works after school and Saturdays in a drugstore and later in the mailing department of W. H. Mullins Company, a metal parts manufacturer.

1911–12

Graduates from high school in 1911, valedictorian of class. Promoted to accountant in the cost department of the Mullins Company, a position he retains off and on through 1921.

1912–16

Attends the Cleveland School of Art. Around 1915 begins to paint his first serious work. In 1916, awarded scholarship to the National Academy of Design in New York City. Returns to Salem after two months in New York (and one day at the Academy). Drawings exhibited in the New York bookshop of Mrs. Mowbray Clarke.

1918

Inducted in July into U. S. Army. Attached to Field Artillery at Camp Jackson, South Carolina; later transferred to the Camouflage Section.

1919

Discharged from Army in January. Returns to the Mullins Company. Continues to paint in his spare time, and makes first print.

1920

Paints full time during a three-month summer

leave from work. Travels briefly to Tennessee, Ohio and New York. Has what he considers his first important show in New York, at the Kevorkian Gallery.

1921

Receives First Prize for watercolor and a silver medal for work submitted to the "First Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Painting," Cleveland Museum of Art. First work enters a museum collection (Brooklyn Museum). Moves in the fall to Buffalo, New York, to become assistant designer at M. H. Birge & Sons, a wallpaper company.

1922

Marries Bertha L. Kenreich of Greenford, Ohio, in May. Begins collection of recordings of classical music.

1923

First child, Mary Alice, born. Other children: Martha Elizabeth (1924), Sarah Ruth (1925), Catherine Esther (1926), Charles Arthur (1929).

1924–28

His work handled by the Montross Gallery, New York.

1925

Purchases house, where he resides for the rest of his life, in Gardenville, New York, a suburb of Buffalo. Exhibition of his work held at the Marie Sterner Gallery, Paris.

1927

Becomes head of the design department of M. H. Birge & Sons.

1929

Begins affiliation with the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery, New York. Resigns from M. H. Birge & Sons.

1930

Show of early watercolors held at the Museum of Modern Art, his first one-man exhibition in a museum.

1933

Death, nine days apart, of his mother and his sister Frances.

1936

Receives *Fortune* magazine illustration commissions, for which he paints railroad yards at Altoona and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and in 1937, sulfur and coal mines in Texas and West Virginia.

1940

Awarded Dana Watercolor Medal, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Begins serving as a juror—through 1955—for the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

1942

Given the Award of Merit Medal, National Institute of Arts and Letters, and becomes a member the following year.

1943

His work achieves a new freedom and fantasy, based upon his early watercolors.

1944

Awarded Chancellor's Medal, University of Buffalo. Retrospective exhibition at the Albright Art Gallery, organized by the gallery and the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy. A smaller version is circulated by the American Federation of Arts in 1945.

1945

Publication of *Charles Burchfield*, American Artists Group, with numerous illustrations and a short text by the artist.

1946–51

Receives honorary degrees from Kenyon College, Harvard University, Hamilton College, and Valparaiso University.

1949–53

Teaches at University of Minnesota, Art Institute of Buffalo, University of Buffalo, Ohio University, and Buffalo Fine Arts Academy.

1956

Travels through the Southwest. Beginning of degenerative illness. Retrospective exhibition held at the Whitney Museum of American Art; show travels to six other American museums. John I. H. Baur's *Charles Burchfield* published in conjunction with retrospective.

1958

Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters; awarded its Gold Medal in 1960.

1963

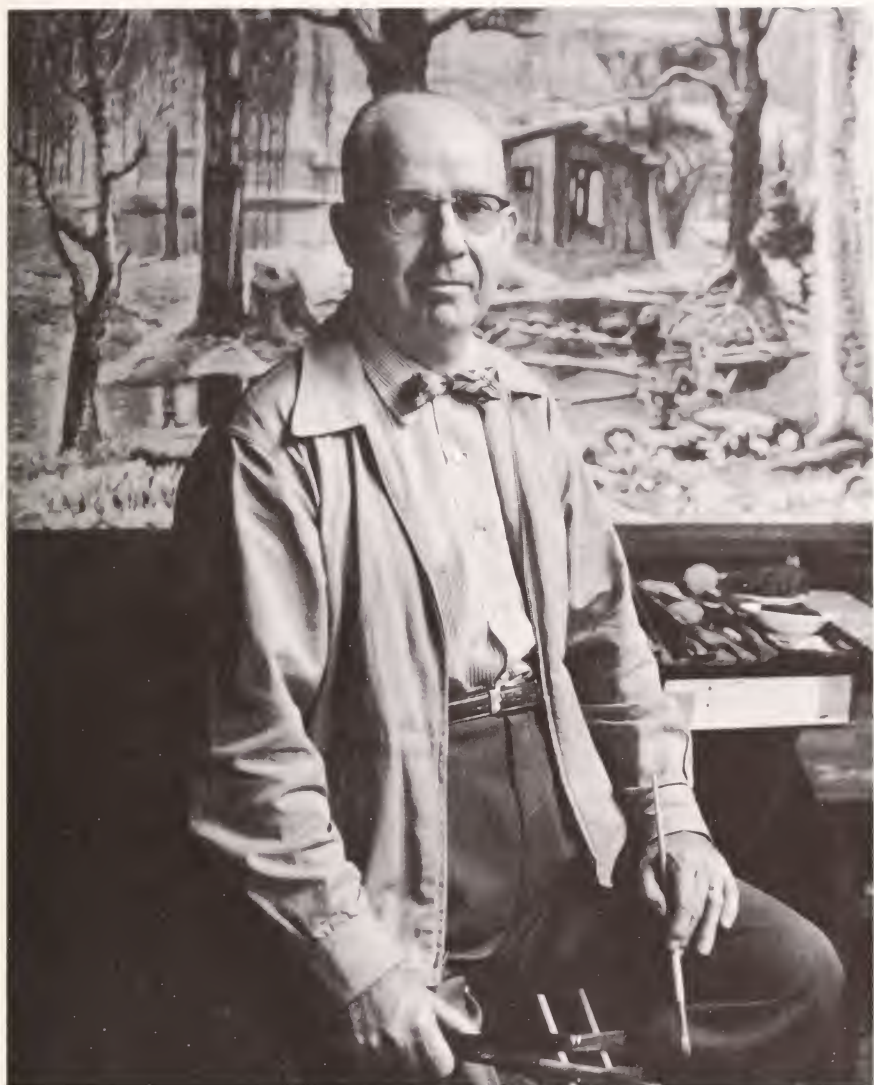
Acts as art consultant for New York State University College, Buffalo.

1966

Final exhibition at the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery, New York. Charles Burchfield Center established at New York State University College, Buffalo.

1967

Dies January 10, in Buffalo.



Charles Burchfield at work on *The Glory of Spring* (1933–55), c. 1955



August Evening, 1916

Watercolor on paper, $19\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{5}{8}$ inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lesley G. Shaefer 55.43

August Evening

August Evening was painted in the backyard of the Burchfield family house on Fourth Street in Salem, Ohio, and is the earliest work by Burchfield owned by the Museum. As the artist indicated in his autobiographical notes, he had begun to paint out-of-doors in the summer of 1915 in order to record his personal reactions to nature. Never interested in or adept at portraying the figure, and finished with his four-year program at the Cleveland School of Art, he turned his full attention to the natural landscape. He had replaced a naturalist's scrutiny—based upon his earlier reading of John Burroughs and Thoreau—with artistic sensitivity. The sunflower, painted in full bloom in August, looms above ornamental tassels of corn. Of such 1916 paintings the artist observed, "everything was carefully drawn and outlined in pencil, the colors filled in."⁷ In this watercolor, however, it is apparent that spontaneous impressions interested him even more than complete ideas. He made such works for himself and without regard for public display. Color notations and unfinished sections, the cloud form with the penciled "w" (a reminder, no doubt, that it should be filled with white), attest to Burchfield's impatience and eagerness to move on to the next work. The black sky of *August Evening* confirms that, during these years

when he was employed full time at the Mullins Company, he sometimes painted at night.

A context for *August Evening* is provided by its striking resemblance to an earlier depiction of the subject by Henry G. Keller, his most important teacher, and its provocative similarity to Charles Demuth's *Daisies*. Keller's work was basically illustrative, albeit of exceptional quality, but his interest in nature themes expressed in striking compositions was nonetheless a significant influence on Burchfield. Demuth's later watercolor demonstrates an elegant and thorough understanding of modernism; his fascination is in the crisp beauty of the daisies and the celebration of their forms. Demuth's flowers are isolated from the landscape in which they were growing, but the sunflowers which figure frequently in Burchfield's art in 1916 bloom amidst the other vegetation in his backyard. Though cultivated, the sunflower is not one of the rarer and finer flowers to which Demuth was so devoted. In these first inspired months of his professional career, Burchfield, through vivid color and the verve of his juxtapositions of perspective and scale, is in step with contemporary modernist innovations, all the while insisting upon a strict attention to nature as he saw it.



Left: Henry G. Keller
Sunflower, c. 1914–15
Watercolor on cardboard,
19⁷/₈ × 14 inches
Cleveland Museum of Art;
Anonymous Gift

Right: Charles Demuth
Daisies, 1918
Watercolor on paper,
17¹/₄ × 11³/₈ inches
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt
Whitney 31.423



Noontide in Late May, 1917

Watercolor and gouache on paper,

21⁵/₈ × 17¹/₂ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.408

(on cover in color)

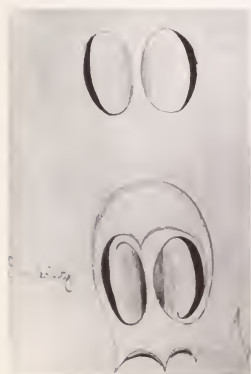
Noontide in Late May

"The typical spring and summer and autumn days, of all shades and complexions, one cannot afford to miss any of them. . . . One's own landscape comes in time to be a sort of outlying part of himself . . . and it reflects his own moods and feelings" —John Burroughs.⁸

Burchfield deeply respected John Burroughs' observations and sentiments about nature, and they provide an insight into the basis of his artistic aspirations. In the nine months that separate the making of *August Evening* and *Noontide in Late May* (both picturing the backyard of his Salem house), Burchfield had begun to use nature to express his own moods and feelings. A new spirit had entered his art. Knowing that Paris was out of the question and wanting to further his artistic education following his graduation from the Cleveland School of Art, he had accepted a scholarship in 1916 to the National Academy of Design in New York City. Though he was deeply unhappy there and left after two months, he succeeded in establishing his first commercial representation, sold a work, and discovered a small audience for his art.

Returning to Salem, he spent all his spare time painting. The landscape had a special resplendence following his months in the city. Burchfield came to consider 1917 his "golden

year." No longer a student, it was his first full year as a professional artist. He ceased to make primary pencil sketches before applying the watercolor. His ideas came to swift fruition as he created the freest and most imaginative works of his early career. Paradoxically, it was at this time that he filled a notebook with his "Conventions for Abstract Thoughts." These small pencil sketches represent about twenty of the darker states of mind, such as Imbecility, Fear, Fascination of Evil, and Dangerous Brooding. Yet *Noontide in Late May*, though the drawing of the bushes and rows of vegetation contains graphic stylizations that relate to those abstract conventions, is not morose, but exuberant in mood. Burchfield described the work, in his penciled comment on its reverse, as "an attempt to interpret a child's impression of noon-tide in late May—The heat of the sun streaming down & rosebushes making the air drowsy with their perfume." His evocative characterization does little to convey the work's tempestuous harmonics and its resonating sequences of patterns, colors, and shapes; in the collision of nature and man-made structures, the drab brown fence and building are not so much overwhelmed by the power of nature as overcome by its profuse beauty.



Charles Burchfield
Imbecility, 1917. From "Conventions for Abstract Thoughts," vol. 1.
Pencil on paper, 9½ × 6¼ inches
Kennedy Galleries, Inc., New York

Tall White Sun & September Elms

“At the gates of the forest, the surprised man of the world is forced to leave his city estimates of great small wise and foolish. The knapsack of custom falls off his back with the first step he takes into these precincts. Here is sanctity which shames our religions, and reality which discredits our heroes. Here we find Nature to be the circumstance which dwarfs every other circumstance, and judges like a god all men that come to her. We have crept out of our close and crowded houses into the night and

morning, and we see what majestic beauties daily wrap us in their bosom”—Ralph Waldo Emerson.⁹

Burchfield is perhaps the last of a succession of American artists since the mid-nineteenth century to espouse, as expressed in Emerson’s writings, the Transcendentalist belief in nature as both manifestation and proof of spirituality. He shared with the Transcendentalists the conviction that nature provides the greatest solace. On a prosaic level, *Tall White Sun*



Tall White Sun, 1917

Watercolor on paper, 22 1/2 × 17 1/4 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.410

shows the second-growth oaks by Turkey Foot Lake in Barberton, Ohio, a small town about halfway between Cleveland and Salem, as they appeared on July 22, 1917. But to Burchfield the scene is charged with spiritual meaning. Writing a friend many years later, he reported that in 1917 he “was trying fiercely (that is the word) to get below the surface of nature, and express the effect the very ‘look’ of a tree had on me.”¹⁰ With exquisite economy, his niche-like formation of trees becomes a kind of altar of sun and luminosity. As Burchfield noted on the back of the work, it communicates “an almost religious feeling. The air becomes saturated with sunlight, until all things seem to melt into a dense white glare.”

In the transition from Burchfield’s earliest mature phase to his later, more realistic pic-

tures, flat and decorative compositions like *Tall White Sun* gave way to scenes conceived with a deeper space and less charged subject matter, as evident in *September Elms*. Though these two watercolors contain similar ingredients, they impart very different effects. The scene of *September Elms* is transcribed without intensifying its emotional or spiritual character. Delicate, lacy foliage is appreciated for its beauty and grace alone. And whereas the illuminated trees in *Tall White Sun* are extrapolated from their environment, these elms are seen spread out randomly on a field against a cloudy, listless sky. It is a pretty, if thin, scene, in which Burchfield is content to paint (though certainly in a very refined manner) the surface appearance of a field near his house in Gardenville, New York.



September Elms, 1927

Watercolor on paper, 23 1/8 × 32 3/4 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.409



Beginning of a Snowstorm, 1920
 Watercolor and gouache on paper,
 17 1/2 × 24 1/2 inches
 Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.407



Cottages in the Winter Rain, c. 1920
 Watercolor on paper, 17 × 30 1/2 inches
 Gift of Charles Simon 77.118

Beginning of a Snowstorm & Cottages in the Winter Rain

Though winter scenes are among the most powerful subjects in his early watercolors, the first period of Burchfield's art (as well as his last) is more closely associated with spring and summer and the sense of rejuvenation these seasons bring. But in early 1918 he decided to abandon motifs based on youthful remembrances of nature, as he felt he could no longer pretend he was a child. Anger and morbidity entered his work, joined by depression and confusion after his discharge from the Army one year later. With this experience came a change in his subject matter, an emphasis on man's often ugly and forlorn presence in nature and the ravages of industrialization. The lightness and verve of works like *Noon-tide in Late May* and *Tall White Sun* of just two years earlier completely disappear from his art. Fall and winter become preferred seasons. Shabby habitations and hunched, unhappy figures now emerge in his paintings. During this middle period of his work, scenes are viewed from a more distant vantage point, and his compositions are starker and simpler as design and mood predominate over the detail and complex linear activity of the early nature fantasies.

By the winter of 1920, Burchfield realized that his new subject was in fact "the great epic poetry of midwest American life, and my own life in connection with it."¹¹ In May 1919, he had been given a copy of Sherwood Anderson's recently published *Winesburg, Ohio*. Its honest descriptions of ordinary incidents and characters struck such a resonant chord in the national consciousness that it was seen as a revelation of all Midwestern American life. Anderson's approach to small-town life paralleled Burchfield's similar scrutiny of the houses and streets of Salem. Burchfield realized that sensitive reportage of small-town, and later urban, life could be a form of metaphor. "It was," as John

I. H. Baur perceived, "to the houses that he turned as the best vehicle for the expression of contemporary life."¹² In 1916 Burchfield had anticipated this subject when he suggested that "a house is often more moody than nature They are built by men as dwellings . . . and this strange creature results. In the daytime they have an astonished look; at dusk they are evil; seem to brood over some crime. . . . Each one is individual."¹³ Burchfield's houses frequently have a double set of upper windows which—in a curious addendum to his series of "Conventions for Abstract Thoughts"—seem to function as eyes. *Beginning of a Snowstorm*, a reproduction of which accompanied Burchfield's September 1928 autobiographical article in *Creative Art*, was painted in an upstairs window of his house; it shows the houses of his neighbors, the Bryans and the Carlyles, across Fourth Street, and then, in a fainter echo, a row of similar houses in the street beyond. He used a heavily diluted watercolor brush technique to convey the feeling of soggy. He wished to communicate a very particular mood: the "foreboding aroused by the approaching storm" at that "moment when the winter rain is just changing to snow—the air is thick and murky, the ground rapidly being covered with wet soggy slush."¹⁴ *Cottages in the Winter Rain*, another Salem scene, repeats a frequent theme of this year: houses beside a blank and impersonal industrial facility, the black smoke of which, spreading its gloom, sinuously twists above the snow-covered landscape. In both watercolors, the compact domestic units are imprisoned by rain and snow; in pristine desolation they are outside the redemption of nature. Their delineated elements reveal not only the artist's chilling isolation, but his ability to connect his own life with a wider social consciousness.



Dawn, 1926

Watercolor on paper, $11\frac{3}{8} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Gift of Charles Simon 77.116



Night Scene with Clouds, c. 1929

Watercolor on paper, $18\frac{1}{8} \times 26\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Gift of a Trustee in honor of John I. H.

Baur 76.30



Night Scene, 1935

Watercolor on paper, $16\frac{1}{8} \times 26\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Gift of Charles Simon 77.117

Dawn, Night Scene with Clouds & Night Scene

Burchfield's art may be said to extend, and finally to culminate, a tradition in American painting of adulation of the landscape. Based upon his worshipful observation of nature, he sought to pictorially embrace all of its conditions, seasons, and temperaments. He moved from his childhood fascination with blades of grass to an adult rapture in the varieties and movements of clouds. Starting in 1920, he made watercolors—often with a lot of gouache added—"in which the skies were the main feature." This subject matter increasingly engaged him. Along with Thomas Cole, Burchfield may be said in certain works to behold "the sky . . . [as] the soul of all scenery, in it are the fountains of light, and shade, and color. Whatever expression the sky takes, the features of the landscape are affected in unison. It is the sky that makes the earth so lovely at sunrise, and so splendid at sunset. In the one it breathes over the earth the crystal-like ether, in the other the liquid gold. . . ." ¹⁵

The Whitney Museum owns three of Burchfield's "sky paintings," the earliest executed in 1926, a year after he had moved with his wife and children to the small Buffalo suburb of Gardenville, New York. Burchfield had taken a job designing wallpaper for M. H. Birge & Sons, a Buffalo company, in 1921. He found the city a colder, less friendly, and certainly

more industrialized place than Salem, Ohio, where he had lived for most of his life. After his move to Gardenville, he was once again able to take long walks and spend time in the countryside. Yet of Gardenville he wrote a friend: "I don't believe there are many more banal and flat places than this village."¹⁶ Made the year after his move there, *Dawn* rather tentatively essays Gardenville's lifeless terrain, in which trees rest in space like spectral afterthoughts. The sky, lit by a golden sun rising behind a placid bank of clouds, provides a brief respite for the solitary suburban walker on his way to work. The two later night scenes present an even more dramatic sense of the sky as arbiter of mood. Their weighty, moving clusters of clouds become the main ingredients of the landscapes. The houses are seen from such a low vantage, and are so darkly oppressed by the clouds as to appear to merge with the earth. The dots of light in *Night Scene* form disembodied eyes which, when set against the clouds, cause strange embryonic creatures to arise. Man's presence is subsumed in the primal forces of the sky. On such occasions, Burchfield's vision shares with that of Arthur G. Dove a bold abstraction and mystic simplification, rendered all the more affecting by its inspiration in the study of nature.



Arthur G. Dove
Land and Seascape, 1942
Oil on canvas, 25 × 34³/₄ inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. N. E. Waldman 68.79

Winter Twilight & Ice Glare

In August 1929, at the age of thirty-eight, Burchfield resigned from his job and for the first time since the seventh grade held no paying position. America would in a matter of months begin to experience the worst economic depression of the century, but Burchfield, affiliated with a new and more active gallery and making regular, though limited, sales, chose to trust in his art.

His income may not have been affected by the Depression, but his imagery was. In works like *Winter Twilight* and *Ice Glare*, he chose to view the buildings and empty streets of Salem and Buffalo “in all their garish and crude primitiveness and unlovely decay.”¹⁷ Out of veracity, not malice, Burchfield captured the American Scene with the seeming dispassion that Walker Evans brought to his photographs and Edward Hopper to his paintings and watercolors. It is Hopper to whom one may turn for some of the most trenchant insights into this period of Burchfield’s work. Lauding

Burchfield’s 1928 Montross Gallery exhibition, Hopper wrote in *The Arts*: “From what is to the mediocre artist and unseeing laymen the boredom of everyday existence in a provincial community, he has extracted a quality that we may call poetic, romantic, lyric. . . . By sympathy with the particular he had made it epic and universal.”¹⁸

Burchfield’s handling of light may also have attracted Hopper to his work. As in certain paintings by Hopper, light pours into darkness from storefronts and street fixtures. The row of buildings with their indistinct store windows in *Early Sunday Morning* may be specifically compared with these details in Burchfield’s oil. Though Hopper’s painting eschews the sort of topical detail, like the automobile, that trades timelessness for nostalgia, it shares with *Winter Twilight* a “sympathy with the particular . . . [that makes] it epic and universal.”

Winter Twilight was a conflation of sites in



Winter Twilight, 1930

Oil on composition board,

27³/₄ × 30¹/₂ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.128

Salem and Buffalo; the building on the extreme left is from Salem and the other two are from Buffalo. The row of structures and the packed snow are reminiscent of Buffalo, while the way in which the settlement simply trails off into desolation, along with the mask of despair on the face of the man who is visible, grippingly evoke the bleakness and loneliness of small-town life.

Watercolor, a transparent medium, would not lend itself to the murky, thick atmosphere which Burchfield sought in *Winter Twilight*. He began to use oil in 1920. Though he painted relatively few oils, for each one he made numerous study drawings, and he pondered details and color balance for prolonged periods. The year he finished *Winter Twilight*, he wrote to Frank K. M. Rehn that he "was going to turn out some good oils or die in the process."¹⁹

All of Burchfield's city scenes are not depressing and imagined. The city's structure and textures furnished special technical opportunities for him, and he enjoyed the challenge of precisely portraying specific locations. The watercolor *Ice Glare* was executed on the site, the corner of Clinton and Lord streets in Buffalo. Like most of Burchfield's watercolors, it was preceded by at least one preparatory drawing. Great care has been taken to transcribe the details of the gridded sketch into the complex composition and varied surfaces of *Ice Glare*'s glowing midday scene.



Edward Hopper
Early Sunday Morning, 1930
 Oil on canvas, 35 × 60 inches
 Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.426



Ice Glare, 1933
 Watercolor on paper, 30³/₄ × 24³/₄ inches
 Purchase 33.64

Charles Burchfield
Preliminary Study for "Ice Glare," 1933
 Carbon on paper with grid overlay,
 14¹/₂ × 12³/₈ inches
 Collection of Louise and Joe Wissert





Old House by Creek, 1932–38
Oil on canvas, 34 1/2 × 57 inches
Purchase 39.14



The Market at Christmastime, 1929–41
Watercolor on paper, 25 1/2 × 42 1/2 inches
Purchase 42.11

Old House by Creek & The Market at Christmastime

Long after he moved out of Buffalo, Burchfield continued to return to the city for subject matter. His Buffalo had no interiors and few inhabitants. Its pictorial life derived from the decay and shabbiness of its buildings and streets. Having resolved to always paint from nature, he perceived the city as part of nature. By the time the Museum purchased *Old House by Creek*, only a few weeks after it was completed, the buildings it depicts had been condemned and demolished. Even when the painting was begun in 1932, the structures were already rotting and falling into the water. What had drawn Burchfield to the spot, at the intersection of Elk and Seneca streets, was “the manner in which terribly hideous objects are being reflected in the oily green water, transformed into shapes of mystery and beauty.”²⁰ The row of structures was twice as long as the section seen here and housed a variety of stores and apartments. Burchfield wrote later that, when he painted *Old House by Creek*, he thought he was under the influence of Maxim Gorki (1868–1936), the controversial Russian Social Realist playwright and novelist: “It seemed just the sort of house some of his characters might live in.”²¹

On his regular walks through the city, Burchfield had other places of special interest. The old Chippewa or Washington Street Market seen in *The Market at Christmastime* was a “never ending source of delight” to him. “There were bins of beans; black, red, black-eyed, white peas, lentils, etc.” which struck “some forgotten expression of childhood.”²² The watercolor was made from studies done at the Market before Christmas in 1929. A photograph of an earlier state of the work indicates that its basic composition was completely resolved in 1929. Only certain punctuating details and the mottled sky, which does so much to establish its strangely depressing tone, were added later. The cut Christmas trees are an affecting and mute reminder of Burchfield’s former themes. The dwarfed pair of figures crossing the street adds a curious but no doubt accurate note to this complex composition. Because of the large number of figures seen here, the watercolor has a greater narrative and documentary quality than the majority of Burchfield’s works. It is a view of a city which, for once, seems to be populated.



An April Mood, 1946 and 1955
Watercolor on paper, 40 × 54 inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman
(and purchase) 55.39

An April Mood

By 1943, when Burchfield dismissed realistic American Scene subject matter and returned to the cheerful fantasies and lighter palette of his 1916–18 watercolors, he had become a more philosophical person. By the middle of the decade, the symphonic expansiveness achieved in these new watercolors began to take on a somewhat tragic tone. The events of World War II penetrated Burchfield's consciousness. And his five children were grown up, his house emptying. Burchfield would often go off and paint on a very remote tract of land on Zimmerman Road in nearby Hamburg. His feelings about this area were so enmeshed with the mournful and pensive melodies of Dvořák's Eighth Quartet, which he listened to frequently, that he called the piece "the Zimmerman Road Quartet." His paintings became muted and their color bleached out; their mood was melancholy.

In *An April Mood*, one of Burchfield's most melancholy paintings, he mixed religious thought with meditation on nature. He conceived the painting on two levels: as a pictorialization of the mood of Good Friday and as a struggle between the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It was intended by the artist to present the landscape as experienced by a person recalling on Good Friday the crucifixion of Christ and considering "the anger of God, frowning on delinquent mankind."²³ Its religious theme is implied by the

groups of three clustered trees in the foreground and background, which serve as symbols of the three crosses at the crucifixion. Sickly, yet standing and groping toward the sun, the trees acquire meaning and strength through our awareness that, with the coming of spring, they will be rejuvenated. *An April Mood* developed from studies Burchfield made in the countryside of old maple trees at the edge of a woods in nearby Boston, New York; as the concept expanded, sections of paper were added. Three trees in a field had been used with similar ambition by Burchfield at least once before, when he made the watercolor *The Three Trees* for the Salem Public Library, as a memorial to the landscape of his youth. But in the earlier example, his symbolism imparted summer's happiness and not death and sacrifice:

Burchfield thought of the sky in *An April Mood* as forming an "April frown." To his experienced weather eye, snow was held in the overhanging clouds and spring would be delayed. Unpleasantness lay ahead, but spring would come. He interpreted April, the month of his own birth, as the time of the annual rebirth of the world. As wild flowers and green and yellow vegetation are beginning to burst forth from the deadened earth, nature's dormant forces—no longer locked in winter's cold and stagnation—come alive again.



Charles Burchfield
The Three Trees, 1931 and 1946
Watercolor on paper, 36 × 60 inches
Salem Public Library, Ohio; Gift of Miss Alice MacMillan as a memorial to the 100 year old MacMillan Book Shop

Goldenrod in December & Winter Light, Backyard

Burchfield's winter scenes always suggest that spring and summer will follow. The sun's importance is amplified; its warmth is palpable. Vegetation maintains a certain vitality. The branches of small scrubs seem to reach up toward the light. But the winter season asserts its distinctions: the tone of the scene is always subdued. In *Goldenrod in December*, for example, a curious stillness and lack of drama hangs over the winter landscape. The barren lowland is barely brightened by the flowering goldenrod and the omnipotent radiating sun.

Goldenrod in bloom were ordinarily a "glorious sight" to Burchfield, but here the flowers form a ragged edge of yellow in a fallow, flat field.

As he aged, Burchfield spent more time, especially in the winter months, watching the landscape from his house, and his backyard became the subject of many drawings and watercolors. Whereas nature became more mysterious and subtle in these works, the buildings—formerly animated with personified features—were presented as extraneous,



Left:
Winter Light, Backyard,
1949–60
Watercolor on paper,
40 × 26 inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Solomon
K. Gross 76.34

Right:
Study of Thistle, 1961
Crayon on bond paper,
13 1/4 × 18 7/8 inches
Purchase 65.39



Goldenrod in December, 1948
 Watercolor on paper, $25\frac{3}{4} \times 39\frac{3}{4}$ inches
 Gift of Flora Whitney Miller in honor of John
 I. H. Baur 74.62

indistinct and prosaic. Leaves, plants, trees and sunlight, on the other hand, were studied continually for the slightest seasonal changes. In 1961 Burchfield made a series of sketches of two large thistle plants that grew in his backyard just outside the door to his studio. For Burchfield, weeds and common plants were always at least as beautiful as cultivated species, and he noted that there were few things from which he could get as much pleasure as drawing these sturdy little plants.



Burchfield's view from his house at Garden-ville was also the subject of *Winter Light, Backyard*. The corner of his studio building is seen at the left. Begun in 1949, this painting—like many of the later ones—was adjusted periodically over the years. A virtually identical half-scale study for *Winter Light, Backyard*, titled *Sun Breaking through Winter Mists*, is owned by the Yale University Art Gallery. Burchfield described the sun in the Yale picture of “a thaw-day in mid-winter” as “send[ing] its penetrating rays through the clouds and fill[ing] the whole atmosphere with a strange ‘other-world’ly light.”²⁴ Bathed in grisaille, the tree and yellow-flecked sunlight are conveyed in this distinctly ordinary scene with an almost religious aura and quietude. It is not so much what Burchfield sees here, but *how* it is observed and felt by him.

Overhanging Cloud in July & Golden Dream

“The child who wandered along the banks of the Little Beaver or who searched out the first hepaticas in Post’s Woods successfully denied the loss of his childhood or, rather, as an adult, reforged his childhood into an integral part of his maturity. Having thus never left the Garden, he could continue to commune with Nature in full, bright sensuality, imagining experiences which the rest of us had long forgotten were possible”—Bruce W. Chambers.²⁵

Burchfield’s achievement resides, as Chambers so succinctly sums it up, in his ability to see the landscape unencumbered by his adulthood. His artistic talent, which

became more refined and skillful with age, enabled him to movingly convey his vision of nature’s terrifying power and extravagant beauty. Two watercolors completed in the summer of 1959 reveal the feelings that Burchfield could bring to these forces of terror and rapture. This summer was a very productive period for the artist. Respiratory difficulties, which had plagued him for three years and finally caused him to be hospitalized, were now under control. He felt euphoric, a state which he attributed to cortisone treatment, and worked with a sense of great confidence and well-being. His ideas seemed to crystalize easily and he had sufficient energy to



Overhanging Cloud in July, 1947 and 1959
Watercolor on paper, 39 1/2 × 35 1/2 inches
Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum of
American Art 60.23

finish older works and to bring new ones to swift completion. His prior interest in an “all-day” sketch that summed up the variety of the day’s weather at a site, now was limited to single phenomena.

In *Overhanging Cloud in July*, Burchfield described his childhood terror of clouds swiftly covering the summer sun. These fears had assumed religious meaning as he got older, and he began to feel that such cloud shadows were a sign of God’s brooding over the earth. In two other watercolors of 1959, Burchfield had tried to combine this symbolic perception with his childhood sensations, but in *Overhanging Cloud in July* he believed he had best succeeded. As clouds cover the summer sun, its eerie, deflected shafts of light plunge down on fields and hills grown suddenly dim and expectant.

Were it not for its larger scale and more contrived, centered composition, *Golden Dream* would come very close to the innocence and unselfconscious inspiration of Burchfield’s early work. As implied by the title of his earlier lithograph, *Summer Benediction*, the

abundance of summer, its enveloping fertility, sanctified the earth for Burchfield. Equating the tree with light, *Golden Dream* returns with marvelous assurance to the theme seen in 1917 in the Museum’s *Tall White Sun*. Stylized swallowtail butterflies decorate the tree, which rises from a yellow and green pond of zig-zag brushstrokes. These strokes and the colorful markings on the wings of the butterflies, for which Burchfield made at least one careful pencil study, have an affinity with the repetition of motifs in his wallpaper designs. Earlier, while amongst trees, Burchfield had recorded in his journal his sense of oneness: “This is mine. . . . Here only can I be with God; the spirit coming through these trees is both me and my creator, merged.”²⁶ The yellow aura that is given off by the tree radiates, in turn, the sunlight that descends from the top of the picture. Its golden glow is cast upon all the rustling and musical movement that shimmers across the liquid surface of this dream-like image, with its islands of verdant and blossoming life.



Golden Dream, 1959
Watercolor on paper, 33 × 39 inches
Promised 50th Anniversary Gift of
Mrs. Nicholas Millhouse



Summer Benediction,
1951
Lithograph,
11 3/4 × 9 inches
Gift of Dr. and Mrs.
David B. Pall 74.24

Notes

1. Charles Burchfield, "Fifty Years as a Painter," in *Charles Burchfield—His Golden Year: A Retrospective Exhibition of Watercolors, Oils and Graphics*, ed. William E. Steadman (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), p. 23.
 2. John I. H. Baur, *Charles Burchfield* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and the Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 61.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
 4. *Ibid.*
 5. John Canaday, "A Poet's Celebration of Nature," *New York Times*, October 8, 1966.
 6. Charles Burchfield, letter to John I. H. Baur, March 11, 1956, in Artists' Files, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (hereafter cited as Whitney Files).
 7. Burchfield, "Fifty Years as a Painter," p. 17.
 8. John Burroughs, *Signs and Seasons* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1886), p. 5.
 9. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: The Modern Library), pp. 406–7.
 10. Burchfield, letter to Dr. Theodor Braasch, May 2, 1958, Theodor Braasch Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
 11. Charles Burchfield, "On the Middle Border," *Creative Art*, 3 (September 1928), p. xxx.
 12. Baur, *Charles Burchfield*, p. 34.
 13. *Ibid.*
 14. Burchfield, response to questionnaire on *Beginning of a Snowstorm*, May 27, 1951, Whitney Files.
 15. Thomas Cole, *Essay on American Scenery* (1835), quoted in Barbara Novak, "On Divers Themes from Nature," Kynaston McShine, ed., *The Natural Paradise* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1976), p. 86.
 16. Baur, *Charles Burchfield*, p. 40.
 17. Burchfield, "On the Middle Border," p. xxx.
 18. Edward Hopper, "Charles Burchfield: American," *The Arts*, 14 (July 1928), pp. 6–7.
 19. Baur, *Charles Burchfield*, p. 52.
 20. Burchfield, letter to Frank K. M. Rehn, October 1, 1938 (xerox copy), Whitney Files.
 21. Burchfield, response to questionnaire on *Old House by Creek*, May 27, 1951, Whitney Files.
 22. Burchfield, response to questionnaire on *The Market at Christmastime*, May 27, 1951, Whitney Files.
 23. Burchfield, handwritten statement on *An April Mood*, undated (c. 1955), Whitney Files.
 24. Quoted in Bruce Robertson, "Charles Burchfield, *Sun Breaking through Winter Mists*," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, 37 (Spring 1980), p. 23.
 25. Bruce W. Chambers, *Charles Burchfield: The Charles Rand Penney Collection* (Rochester, New York: Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, 1978), p. 27.
 26. Quoted in Matthew Baigell, *Charles Burchfield* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1976), p. 55.
- Burchfield's monogrammatic signature was an adaptation of his astrological sign, Aries. He freely drew it as a V-shape with curved ends, adding three prongs to the left part of the V for E, his middle initial (for Ephraim), bracketed by a stylized C and B.*

Selected Bibliography

Baigell, Matthew. *Charles Burchfield*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1976.

Baur, John I. H. *Charles Burchfield*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and the Macmillan Company, 1956.

———. *Charles E. Burchfield at Kennedy Galleries: The Early Years, 1915–1929*. New York: Kennedy Galleries, Inc., 1977.

———. *Charles E. Burchfield: The Middle Years, 1929 to 1950*. New York: Kennedy Galleries, Inc., 1978.

———. *Charles E. Burchfield: The Late Years and Selected Earlier Works*. New York: Kennedy Galleries, Inc., 1979.

Burchfield, Charles. "On the Middle Border." *Creative Art*, 3 (September 1928), pp. xxv–xxxii.

———. Foreword to *Charles Burchfield*. New York: American Artists Group, 1945.

———. "Fifty Years as a Painter." In *Charles Burchfield—His Golden Year: A Retrospective Exhibition of Watercolors, Oils and Graphics*. Edited by William E. Steadman. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965.

Chambers, Bruce W. *Charles Burchfield: The Charles Rand Penney Collection*. Rochester, New York: Memorial Art Gallery and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, 1978.

Charles Burchfield: A Retrospective Exhibition of Water Colors and Oils, 1916–1943. Buffalo, New York: Albright Art Gallery, 1944.

Trovato, Joseph S. *Charles Burchfield: Catalogue of Paintings in Public and Private Collections*. Utica, New York: Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, 1970.

Works in the Permanent Collection

August Evening, 1916

Watercolor on paper, $19\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{5}{8}$ inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lesley G. Shaefer 55.43

Doodle with Stars, 1916

Pencil on paper, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Gift of the Raydon Gallery in honor of John I.

H. Baur 74.5

Noontide in Late May, 1917

Watercolor and gouache on paper,

$21\frac{5}{8} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.408

Tall White Sun, 1917

Watercolor on paper, $22\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.410

Beginning of a Snowstorm, 1920

Watercolor and gouache on paper,

$17\frac{1}{2} \times 24\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.407

Cottages in the Winter Rain, c. 1920

Watercolor on paper, $17 \times 30\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Gift of Charles Simon 77.118

Dawn, 1926

Watercolor on paper, $11\frac{3}{8} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Gift of Charles Simon 77.116

September Elms, 1927

Watercolor on paper, $23\frac{1}{8} \times 32\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.409

Night Scene with Clouds, c. 1929

Watercolor on paper, $18\frac{1}{8} \times 26\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Gift of a Trustee in honor of John I. H.

Baur 76.30

The Market at Christmastime, 1929–41

Watercolor on paper, $25\frac{1}{2} \times 42\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Purchase 42.11

Winter Twilight, 1930

Oil on composition board,

$27\frac{3}{4} \times 30\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.128

Old House by Creek, 1932–38

Oil on canvas, $34\frac{1}{2} \times 57$ inches

Purchase 39.14

Ice Glare, 1933

Watercolor on paper, $30\frac{3}{4} \times 24\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Purchase 33.64

Night Scene, 1935

Watercolor on paper, $16\frac{1}{8} \times 26\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Gift of Charles Simon 77.117

An April Mood, 1946 and 1955

Watercolor on paper, 40×54 inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman
(and purchase) 55.39

Overhanging Cloud in July, 1947 and 1959

Watercolor on paper, $39\frac{1}{2} \times 35\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum of
American Art 60.23

Goldenrod in December, 1948

Watercolor on paper, $25\frac{3}{4} \times 39\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Gift of Flora Whitney Miller in honor of John
I. H. Baur 74.62

Winter Light, Backyard, 1949–60

Watercolor on paper, 40×26 inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Solomon K.

Gross 76.34

Summer Benediction, 1951

Lithograph, $11\frac{3}{4} \times 9$ inches

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. David B. Pall 74.24

Golden Dream, 1959

Watercolor on paper, 33×39 inches

Promised 50th Anniversary Gift of
Mrs. Nicholas Millhouse

Study of Thistle, 1961

Crayon on bond paper, $13\frac{1}{4} \times 18\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Purchase 65.39

418–J2, n.d.

Pencil on paper, $17 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Gift of the Raydon Gallery in honor of John I.

H. Baur 74.7

Whitney (In Deep Woods), n.d.

Pencil on paper, 8×5 inches

Gift of the Raydon Gallery in honor of John I.
H. Baur 74.6

CONCENTRATIONS

*A Series of 50th Anniversary Exhibitions
Sponsored by Champion International Corporation*

MAURICE B. PRENDERGAST

January 9 – March 2, 1980

GASTON LACHAISE

March 5 – April 27, 1980

JOHN SLOAN

April 30 – June 22, 1980

CHARLES BURCHFIELD

June 25 – August 17, 1980

STUART DAVIS

August 20 – October 12, 1980

CHARLES SHEELER

October 15 – December 7, 1980

AD REINHARDT

December 10, 1980 – February 1, 1981

ALEXANDER CALDER

February 4 – March 29, 1981